

LITERATURE.

Some Recent Hymnaries.

By the Rev. Robert Westly Peach.

I.

THE years of the closing decade of the nineteenth century thus far spent have been marked by a distinct advance in the compilation and editing of hymnaries. The selection of hymns has been carried forward in a spirit of freedom from the authority of mere names, and of reliance upon the guidance of usage, taste and sober judgment. And when the hymns have been chosen, conscientious and scholarly pains have not been spared to fix upon a text which will tend to become standard, because of its being, in each case, the most nearly perfect form obtainable of the hymn in question. Editors have made very few changes; but they have freely admitted every alteration which, after having been tested, has widely commended itself to the affections of worshipers; and they have undertaken vast labors to make a history of alterations, additions and dates, all in the interest of honesty and culture.

By "freedom from the authority of mere names" is meant that the discovery of a credit to Watts, Doddridge, the Wesleys, Miss Steele, the Olney hymnists, Montgomery, Neale or Bonar, for examples, places the compiler under no sense of obligation to include any given hymn. His subjection is acknowledged to two canons. One may again be described as "taste and sober judgment;" the other is Use. In his submission to the latter the compiler is generally wiser than his critics, who tell him insistently to admit only, "good poetry and good hymns." He preserves many a good old hymn which is poor poetry, and gains the gratitude of many a worshiper, who still wants to sing "Am I a Soldier of the Cross," and "Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve." It is true that he who makes his major canon Use will have a long list of pieces which would not find place in a worthy anthology of religious verse; and it is equally true that he who is strenuous for good poetry, seeking praise-

lyrics, shunning the didactic, making Taste his major canon, will have as long a list of pieces which the people will not sing. It is a need of worshipers that their hymns shall be able to increase their faith and deepen their devotional spirit, as well as give expression to their praises.

An analytical estimate of seven notable hymnaries which have been put forth since the beginning of 1890 is herewith presented.

In that year Mr. Edwin A. Bedell gave us "The Church Hymnary," which was afterward adopted by the Reformed Church of North America and is in use in many Congregational and Presbyterian churches. If we compare it with the leading books of the years 1874-1885, in this country, the first difference which impresses us is that of the treatment of eighteenth century writers. In the hymn-books of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Protestant Episcopal churches, Dr. Robinson's "Spiritual Songs" and "Laudes Domini," Hitchcock, Eddy and Schaff's "Hymns and Songs of Praise," and "Carmina Sanctorum" (with Mudge in the place of Schaff), all published during the period named, Watts has an average of one hundred and thirty hymns (altho the Episcopal book had but thirty-six); Doddridge has an average of thirty, Wesley forty-eight, Miss Steele nineteen and Newton twenty-three. "The Church Hymnary" reduces Watts to seventy, Doddridge to twenty, Wesley to forty-two, Miss Steele to eight and Newton to fifteen. Adding five other eighteenth century writers—John Wesley, Beddome, Toplady, Stennett and Cowper—the ten furnish two-fifths of the hymns in the Presbyterian hymnal of 1874, about one-third of "Hymns and Songs of Praise," "Spiritual Songs" and the Baptist hymnal of 1883; one-fourth of "Laudes Domini" and "Carmina Sanctorum," and but a little over one-sixth of "The Church Hymnary." This reducing and sifting process is an excellence, when not carried too far. Every one of the best-loved hymns of these and others of the older writers should be retained, except for some very weighty

opposing reason, and in addition as many more as may be judged to possess spiritual truth and poetic beauty. Herein "The Church Hymnary" maintains a wise balance, on the whole, tho slightly deficient in the hymns of Tate and Brady and John Wesley. If it seems to have proportionately few of Miss Steele's pieces, and a surplusage of Charles Wesley's and Cowper's, this is exactly in keeping with the best judgment of our time.

Leading hymnists whose literary activity dated from the opening of the nineteenth century to twenty-five years ago afford a second test. Of these Montgomery may be taken first, as founder of a new school of hymnology, and Neale last, of whom hardly less can be said, for his translations make over the productions of the Latin hymn-writers into English classics. In the number of their hymns in current use, Neale is next to Watts and Wesley, and Montgomery stands fourth. In this period we have also Heber, Kelly, Lyte, Hastings, Keble, Miss Elliott, Faber and Alford. "The Church Hymnary" keeps rather more of the strong hymns of Hastings than the total of his best, and falls slightly short in the case of Faber. The other writers are generously represented in it—Heber, Lyte and Miss Elliott in particular.

In the matters of catholicity, balance and progressiveness, an important test must be the treatment of hymnists of note who have passed away during the quarter-century just closing, or who are yet alive. There are sixteen who have an average in our seven books of from twenty-three hymns down to five. Bonar stands at the head, and is next to Montgomery in the number of his evangelical and poetical hymns in current use. The others are, in the order indicated: Miss Winkworth, Monsell, How, Ellerton, Caswall, Miss Havergal, Wordsworth, Palmer, Baker, Thring, Mrs. Alexander, Miss Borthwick, Bickersteth, Chandler and Dix. "The Church Hymnary" is strikingly deficient only in the hymns of Bishop How, but has rather too few of Ellerton's, Mrs. Alexander's and Miss Borthwick's.

There are about fifty other writers who have each one hymn, sometimes two, occurring in all seven of the books, and other hymns in a part of them, but not enough to

average five. In addition there are nearly forty writers who fail to obtain admission into at least one book, but who have an average of from one to four pieces in the others. "The Church Hymnary" excludes only four of these: James D. Burns, Cooke, MacLagan and Mrs. Van Alstyne. They have a total of nineteen hymns (seven well known), occurring thirty-eight times, in a part or all of the other books.

The seven books have one hundred and seventy hymns in common; and one hundred and forty more are in six of them. "The Church Hymnary" omits only four of these. One hundred and seventy-five hymns are each in five of the books, and of these it has all but twenty-three. Another hundred and fifty hymns or thereabouts are in four of them. Thus, nine-tenths of the large body of hymns most widely favored in our decade are in "The Church Hymnary."

This book has nearly one thousand hymns, an ample number, if not too many; for each hymn could not have its separate tune without making too bulky a volume, and only eight hundred tunes are given. It has open, fair pages. Its classifications are good, altho by an oversight Keble's "There is a Book, Who Runs May Read" is assigned under "Holy Scriptures." ("In Excelsis" copies the mistake.) It has excellent indexes—that of authors grouping the American writers, which calls attention to the fact that it is rich in our home-born praises. Miss Anna B. Warner, however, is not represented, altho her beautiful "We Would See Jesus" has found a wide and loving acceptance, and her children's hymns are sung in many tongues. "The Church Hymnary" has only nineteen pieces assigned to children, which is a deficiency. It repeats the first stanza of every hymn, a needless waste of space. Everything considered, it is an excellent book.

In 1892, "The Hymnal, Revised and Enlarged," of the Protestant Episcopal Church took permanent form. It so sharply pruned the old away that barely one-tenth of its numbers are supplied by our ten representative writers of the eighteenth century. Wesley is not poorly represented, but Watts has only sixteen hymns, Doddridge seven, and Newton six. Tate and Brady among the older writers are alone in its marked favor.

Writers of our next period are more generously treated by this hymnary, with the exceptions of Kelly, who has but seven pieces, and Hastings, who is reduced to a single hymn. On the other hand, Alford and Neale it unduly favors, the latter writer holding its place of honor, with twenty-nine numbers.

Of the later hymnists, Bonar is represented by only one-third as many hymns as Neale, ten, while our pre-eminent American, Dr. Palmer, has only three. Miss Winkworth and Miss Borthwick also are rather undervalued. But this Episcopal hymnal is excessively devoted to Thring, and shows a marked partiality to Caswall, Baker, Mrs. Alexander, Ellerton, How, Bickersteth and Dix. This book stands alone in bearing strongly the marks of denominational preference.

Not a single hymn of Anstice, Leonard Bacon, Cotterill, Mrs. Cousin, Denny, Gill, Lynch, Samuel Longfellow, Macduff, Massie, Medley, Stennett, Miss Waring, Whittier or Wreford is found in this hymnary. They are represented by ninety-six hymns (thirty-three important), occurring two hundred and twenty-five times in the other books.

This Episcopal hymnal omits thirty-seven hymns which are in all of the other books; one hundred and nine which are in five other books; ninety-six which are in four of the others. Thus less than two-thirds of the hymns most nearly unanimously settled upon by the other books are found in this. It has a total of six hundred and seventy-nine hymns, as many as can well be put into a book the word edition of which is so frequently bound together with the prayer-book for carrying in the hand. A goodly portion of these hymns, forty-eight in number, are for children. None of Miss Warner's are among them, but American writers, excepting three or four Bishops, are slighted by this book. It is not richly furnished with indexes, which would unduly increase its bulk. While the exigencies of the Church Year compel this hymnary to differ from the others, yet it appears from our analysis that the Episcopalians have not a praise book equal to the standard of our decade.

In 1892, also, Dr. Robinson brought forth his "New Laudes Domini." It has two hun-

dred and seventy-five hymns of our ten last-century writers—only sixteen less than in "Laudes Domini," and approximately one-fourth of his whole number. In both books he holds rather too tenaciously to the old. It would be hard, for example, to show that Miss Steele has twenty-one hymns worthy of retention in our day, or Watts one hundred and fifteen. Withal, Tate and Brady have hardly enough.

In the next period, Dr. Robinson has rather more than a fair proportion of Kelly and Hastings, and less of Alford and Neale, but on the whole maintains a wise balance.

When we come to writers of the class yet living, or deceased within twenty-five years, we find Dr. Robinson offsetting the Protestant Episcopal hymnal, having twenty-seven of Dr. Palmer's noble hymns, and being more or less deficient in the productions of Chandler, Caswall, Baker, Miss Winkworth, Miss Borthwick, Mrs. Alexander, Ellerton, How and Dix. If Dr. Robinson had been a little severer with his beloved ancients, and a little more appreciative of our more sentimental moderns, his latest book might have been accepted as "Laudes Domini in Excelsis." Of the minor writers, however, he has a widely and wisely chosen selection, omitting only Downton and Mrs. Van Alstyne, who have ten hymns, chosen sixteen times in the other books. Dr. Robinson omits sixteen hymns which are in all the other books, thirty-five that are in five, and fifty-seven that are in four. He thus has five-sixths of the most favored hymns of our day.

No emphasis is laid upon hymns for children in the "New Laudes Domini." This book, too, wastes space by repeating the first stanza of each hymn. It has too many hymns without separate tunes, and the music is set too closely for the words printed therewith, in many instances necessitating crowding. It is strange that Dr. Robinson should have retained "Day of Judgment, Day of Wonders," and returned to "The Voice of Free Grace Cries." His biographical index of authors is a most interesting feature. His classifications and indexes are most accurate, and altogether his latest book is not outclassed by the others which have been enriched so greatly by his labors.

QUINCY, MASS.

PARSON KELLEY. *By A. E. W. Mason and Andrew Lang.* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co. \$1.50.) Here is a good combination—a partnership wholly satisfying. "Mason & Lang, Romancers," the sign should read, hanging over a book-dusty literary shop in a goodly London street that we know of. Fine traces of Dumas père, echoes of old ballads, the brilliance of the Montagus, the flash of small swords, the atmosphere of the eighteenth century's first quarter in England and France, rattling romance done up in finically fine literature, a smack of Virgil and Theocritus dashed into modern adventure—a glorious hotch-potch, indeed, and a downright engaging story all around. We will not divulge the plot, for that is the backbone of the book, but we insist upon saying that Wogan and Kelley and Scrope are a trio to warm the romance-reader's blood to the bubbling point. If *Parson Kelley* does not turn out to be a prime favorite with the critics and the public we shall feel sure that the public and the critics are very dull.

THE CHRONICLES OF AUNT MINERVY ANN. *By Joel Chandler Harris.* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.) Mr. Harris has his limitations, no doubt, but our enjoyment of his transcripts from negro life has none that we know of. Aunt Minervy Ann Perdue is a character to be framed in the reader's memory. Once known she will never be forgotten. Mr. Harris's vision of the old time dorky is absolute. But along with an admirably dramatic presentation of Minervy Ann we have some notable sketches of Georgia whites done in broad wash, if we may so call it, which give a liberal impression of a certain stratum of Southern existence at the beginning of the "Reconstruction Period." This chronicle, indeed, gives Mr. Harris an opportunity to put in all the lights and shades of a very picturesque life. Some of his touches are, perhaps, a trifle too grotesque; but as a whole the book stands out strong, peculiar, full of a charming genius. The numerous illustrations by Mr. A. B. Frost are true to the story and its people.

DIONYSIUS, THE WEAVER'S HEART'S DEAREST. *By Blanche Willis Howard.* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.) A good

story was never more foolishly loaded down with a name than is this. A charming art, however, prevents the break-down which is due. We do not often meet with literary craftsmanship of a more attractive sort, and the story, as a story, is distinctly fresh and strong. The author's long residence on the continent has given her command of the life she depicts; and while we do not find in this novel the charm of "Guenn," there is a strong attraction in it which holds to the end. A pleasant half-day is in store for a host of readers.

LETTERS OF SIDNEY LANIER. *Selections from His Correspondence, 1866-1881. With Portraits.* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.00.) Sidney Lanier's life was a beautiful one—as sad as it was lovely—and reading these letters gives a sweet emphasis to the impression made by his poetry. The larger part of the letters were written to Mr. Gibson Peacock and to Bayard Taylor, altho there are several to Paul Hayne. A number of Taylor's letters to Lanier are also included, and many notes on music and musical impressions give the curiously rapturous delight with which Lanier heard many of the world's most famous singers and musicians. All through the correspondence runs the poet's sweet cheerfulness, which was maintained against troubles, adversities and illness bitter enough to have crushed almost any spirit. Two portraits of Lanier and a fac-simile of a letter to Bayard Taylor appear in the book.

TRAMPING WITH TRAMPS. STUDIES AND SKETCHES OF VAGABOND LIFE. *By Josiah Flynt.* (New York: The Century Company. \$1.50.) To every person who has the slightest desire to read the great book of human nature in its lowest lines, Mr. Flynt's sketches of tramp-life and studies of the criminal temperament must prove absorbingly interesting. What good may finally come of such investigations as are here described we cannot say. The whole subject has a discouraging atmosphere; but we shall doubtless gain a strong light by which to rearrange our dealings with the idle, the refractory and the criminal classes, all of which tend to coalesce. Mr. Flynt's adventures as a tramp are told with a cold, con-

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II.

"THE Hymnal" of the Presbyterian Church, adopted also by the Congregational Publishing House, appeared in 1895. It gives nearly one-fifth of its space to the leading eighteenth century authors, a fair proportion. Its predecessors had thirty-five of Miss Steele's hymns; it has but five, which is swinging rather too far the other way. Newton hardly receives his dues.

The older nineteenth century hymnists fare well in this book, altho Kelly, Faber and Alford have some of their excellent hymns omitted. The later principal writers also are as a whole drawn upon liberally and discreetly, except that the book does scant justice to Palmer, and could well give Mrs. Alexander a somewhat larger place. It agrees with the Episcopal book in an overfondness for How, Thring, Bickersteth and Dix.

This hymnary agrees with those of Bedell and Robinson in excluding the blind author of three thousand praise songs, but Mrs. Van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) has a number of hymns which will yet find a place in the best collections. It also omits "We Would See Jesus," and "One More Day's Work for Jesus" and other of Miss Warner's hymns of loving service, and has no room for Cooke, Cotterill, W. C. Doane, Littledale, Massie, Macduff, MacLagan, Moultrie, Onderdonk and Whitfield. Combined, these have forty-seven hymns in the other books (seventeen important), occurring ninety-two times.

Five hymns which are in all the other books, "The Hymnal" omits; also thirty which find place in five books, and seventy in four. Like the "New Landes Domini," it has five-sixths of the staple hymns of this decade.

This Presbyterian book is deficient in hymns for children. Its progressiveness is indicated by the inclusion of Barnby's set-

ting of Tennyson's "Sunset and Evening Star." It has the good rule of printing the first stanza with the music and the remaining ones under it, without repetition. It made a useful innovation in placing the indexes of first lines and of tunes at the beginning of the book, and another, in indexing first lines of different stanzas with which the same hymn begins in other books. The classification and indexes are thoroughly full and accurate. The editing and proof-reading are exceptionally scholarly and correct. Each page is typographically beautiful, with its black letter heading and its well-spaced musical settings. In several respects this book marked a decided advance over all its predecessors. Its worst limitations arise from the editor's ambition to keep close to the bounds of seven hundred hymns. Another hundred or more, chosen with equal judgment, would have made this book a triumph.

The Century Company brought out "In Excelsis" in 1897. It gives to the principal eighteenth century writers a little less than one-sixth of its space, and wants some of the good hymns of Watts, Miss Steele and Newton. Further back, Tate and Brady are scantily represented in it.

Of the older authors of our century, Kelly and Hastings are rather slighted, and Neale is overfavoured. Of our best more recent hymnists, Bonar and Mrs. Alexander are not used as fully as they deserve, while Chandler, Caswall, Thring and Bickersteth are overworked. This hymnary is remarkable for its full treatment of the more important minor writers—only Bishops Woodford and W. C. Doane being left out. They have nine hymns, given on an average twice each in the other books. It is unique in its closeness of adherence to what a critic calls "the majority principle," for it contains over six hundred of the six hundred and forty hymns common to four or more of our seven books. 'Tis not overlooked that two of them are later than "In Excelsis,"—nor that other books went before the seven. The principal method of its compilation is

apparent. Of the hymns which are found in six, five and four of the seven hymnaries, all but five, four and twenty-eight, respectively, are in "In Excelsis."

This book follows the Presbyterian Hymnal in certain excellences, putting the indexes of first lines (with the first lines of variant forms of certain hymns noted) and of tunes at the beginning; having the same well-spaced pages with black-letter headings; never repeating the first stanza of a hymn. It is deficient, likewise, in children's hymns. Its numbers 219 and 239 are variants of the same hymn, and No. 46 is duplicated in No. 849. It has a queer page of "supplementary hymns" without tunes, and thirty-nine "supplementary tunes," an awkward arrangement, caused either by a lack of skill or care, or by an afterthought. It lacks an index of Scripture texts. One excellent feature peculiar to itself is the printing of hymn-credits in very fine type and using only the initials of the authors' Christian names. The singer's eye hardly notices the credit, and the worshiper has not his attention distracted.

The year of grace 1898 gave light to a new Baptist book, "Sursum Corda," issued also without the distinctive Baptist hymns, for general use. It is deficient in the devotions of Doddridge, Miss Steele and Newton, and has disproportionately many of John Wesley's. Tate and Brady are not drawn upon largely enough. It has a strong and unbecoming bias against Montgomery and Kelly, is deficient in Hastings's sturdy hymns, and Neale's beautiful expressions of praise, has an excess of appreciation of Faber, and ranks T. H. Gill among the major hymnists.

As to the later writers, this book is excellently balanced, altho possibly slightly deficient in the pieces of Chandler, Palmer, Miss Winkworth, Miss Bostwick and Mrs. Alexander. Of minor writers, Baynes, Cotterill, Downton, Macduff, Mason and Osler find no place in "Sursum Corda." Of the hymns which occur in all the other books, in five, and in four of them, it omits, respectively, ten, twenty-six and sixty-four, and has over five-sixths of those most generally favored by our present compilers.

This hymnary has only eleven pieces for children. It retains the old fashion of keeping all indexes at the close of the book, and

has no index of texts; but it has an excellent biographical index of authors. It refrains from capitalizing personal pronouns applied to the Deity, agreeing in this with Dr. Robinson's book; all the rest, happily, use the capitals, as expressions of and aids to devotion. It indexes the first lines of different stanzas with which some hymns begin in other books, an excellence; but adheres to the antiquated strict alphabetical order, instead of grouping first lines beginning with the same word or words, thus:

"I do not ask that life may be . . ."

"If thou but suffer God to guide thee . . ."

"I gave my life for thee . . ."

The middle line should come last, and after all lines beginning with the pronoun I, and so in all similar cases. Hymn 376 is repeated, dropping one stanza, in 766. This book lacks uniformity, sometimes printing the second stanza of a hymn immediately under the music, sometimes repeating the first stanza; now crediting a piece to C. Wesley, then to Charles Wesley. It still assigns "We would see Jesus" to Ellen Ellis. Too often the hymn has its setting on the opposite page. The notes are closely set, giving too little room for accompanying words. But there is a purpose in this. With the same number of hymns, very nearly, as "In Excelsis," this book gives about one hundred more tunes, and another hundred more repetitions of tunes, and does it in almost one hundred less pages. "In Excelsis" is its nearest competitor in the number of tunes. "Sursum Corda" gives a larger choice of tunes, new and old, for a given number of hymns than any other book. It was quite excessive to give five to "There is a fountain filled with blood," and the best-known tune not among them. The book, in fact, offers too many alternate settings, and thus has pages crowded sometimes to confusion. Withal, it is edited with scholarly care, is catholic and progressive; witness to the last point the inclusion of Kipling's "Recessional." This book and the next also, have Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."

"The Church Hymnary" is a good title, for it has been appropriated across the water, in 1898, by the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland—Established, Free and United—and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Here

the critics at last have their ideal book. It has but little over six hundred numbers, and it has been produced, most evidently, under the rule of "good poetry and good hymns." It is full of hymns of sentiment. The old writers heretofore used as a basis of comparison furnish but one-eighth of its pages. It is fair toward the Wesleys and Newton and rich in Cowper, but reduces Watts to twelve hymns (who perhaps never before came so near to extinguishment), gives Doddridge six, and can find only "Father, whate'er of earthly bliss" worthy of retention out of all that Miss Steele wrote. Tate and Brady also are represented by a solitary piece. In its radical exclusion of old hymns our Scottish book is chargeable with a serious deficiency, if worshipers are to be considered in compiling a book of praises, and what they love is to be balanced against what the editors and their academic critics admire.

Dr. Hastings, again, is reduced to two hymns, and Palmer has only five; there is a deficiency also of Neale and Monsell; otherwise the leading writers of our century are well represented, Baker, Mrs. Alexander, Miss Havergal, Ellerton, How and Dix being excessively favored.

Minor writers are excluded in large number: Anstice, Leonard Bacon, Mrs. Barbauld, Beddome, Bowring, Campbell, Collyer, Cooke, Cotterill, W. C. Doane, Hammond, T. Haweis, Littledale, Lynch, Mackellar, Medley, Moultrie, Onderdonk, Osler, A. T. Russell, Stennett, Whitfield, and Woodford are some of them, and these have one hundred and seventeen hymns in the other books (forty-two major hymns; among them "In the cross of Christ I glory").

This book lacks sixty-three hymns that are in all the other books, one hundred and twenty-three that occur in five, and one hundred and fifteen in four, a total of nearly one-half of those most largely in use in our latest hymnaries.

Here, however, we find editing at its best. In the preface, acknowledgments are tabulated, showing that no hymn has been included except by permission, when any one entitled to grant permission could be found. Throughout the book each hymn has an appropriate text of Scripture prefixed in full,

and these texts are indexed at the close. Each hymn has marks of expression set before its lines. Nowhere else have such pains been taken with the text of the hymns, and a tabulated appendix to the large-type word edition gives a history of alterations. One alteration made by the editors is commended to our American Protestant hymnarists. It makes the closing line of each stanza of Milman's beautiful prayer, "When our heads are bowed with woe," read "Jesus, Man of Sorrows, hear." This was originally, "Gracious Son of Mary, hear." What could be finer than the changed form, which, moreover, has a deeper significance.

Fanny Crosby has four hymns in this book. It has almost one hundred hymns for children, calling upon Miss Warner for two of her best. In general, American writers are not neglected, altho the choice of their pieces is sometimes strange. The two hymns of Holmes which are best known, for example, are omitted, and one almost unknown chosen. Altogether, the Scottish-Irish committee is better at editing than at compiling.

In making the foregoing estimates and comparisons, certain considerations have been borne in mind. First, the size of the book; then the number of available hymns of any given author; then the trend of our day toward or away from a hymnist's work. To illustrate: Miss Steele, Beddome, Stennett, Toplady, Hastings, Miss Winkworth, and Miss Bostwick, among others, are falling in the general estimation of hymnarists, while the Wesleys, Cowper, Heber, Lyte, Keble, Miss Elliott, Wordsworth and Thurg are being more highly valued than ever before. Fourth, the necessities of classification, making it imperative to balance the number of hymns under a given heading; and then that other necessity of admitting certain fine tunes, and along with them the hymns which they have made popular.

These estimates have been concerned with hymns, not tunes. As thorough-going analyses would be required to make just comparisons from the musical standpoint, and the final valuation of a book would wait upon the combined results. The writer is unable, even from the hymnarist's standpoint, to suggest an exact order of these books, from best to least good; he is only sure that the

latest is not first, nor the oldest last, nor the one in which he is most interested at the head. Easy declarations of supremacy are well enough for advertising circulars or for testimonials from hasty examiners; but the fact is that all of the five books which come into closest comparison are of a high excellence that is most gratifying to one who loves the praises of God in the sanctuary.

QUINCY, MASS.

Mr. Ford's New Romance.*

THERE is a genuine luxury in reading a good, strong, leisurely romance, in which a numerous company of interesting actors play out their life-drama before us, with all the attractive changes of scenery and costume, and with the fine shifting of attention from incident to incident which the clever artist knows so well how to plan. Mr. Ford, in his latest story has surpassed himself, hands down. He was wrought with loving patience, taking a story-teller's delight in unrolling his well studied record. From the first page onward he leads his reader captive to the spell of a very charming spirit of romance which moves upon the face of a great deep of words. We say this last thing not to be ironical; for, altho Mr. Ford's fault in this story is unquestionably wordiness, the flood of diction is always interesting. We may as well speak right out, however, and at the outset offer our objection to the prolixity which does mar what, in almost every other respect, is a masterpiece of fiction. Fifty thousand words could be judiciously cut out of the book, leaving it intact as a story and well-nigh perfect as a piece of literature.

We are inclined to say that the heroine here set before us is a genuine creation. Janice is a very human girl, by no means a faultless creature of Mr. Ford's imagination, rather a strong realization of an exceptionally bright, shifty and thoroughly clever maiden of America in the days of the Revolution—a girl notably willful and not violently scrupulous under a great strain of circumstances, yet on the whole pure, sparkling, wholesome, lovable. She is well, even powerfully drawn, and set for us in a solid

frame of history. Behind her stretches a liberal background of the social, domestic, religious and political aspects of the time overhung with the curious raw atmosphere of a frontier period. Mr. Ford seems to be at home with his materials. What he gives us wears authenticity on its face, as much, perhaps, on account of evident faithful study and labor as on account of the familiar historic figures and events cleverly introduced.

We have been impressed with admiration of Mr. Ford's method of telling his story. He has not fallen into the one-character form of fiction writing recently so popular. He marshals his characters with great regularity, and ranges them so that none is obscured. Each is brought into just relations with the story and properly makes the reader's acquaintance to just the extent necessary in the scheme of the narrative. When we are done with Mr. Ford's people we look back at them pleasantly, feeling that they have actually lived, and that we are indebted to them for a pleasant entertainment. They have not bored us with a theory of life; they have not obtruded their moral lesions and mental sores for our inspection; they have not posed as awful examples with the pretense of serving a great purpose; what they have done for us can be described with few words; they have made us "forget their fictitious origin;" they have entertained us rationally and without the use of degrading agencies, and have presented a period of American life in terms of its best aspirations.

We must not tell the story of JANICE MEREDITH, that would be unfair to both romance and reader; but we can say that Janice, the heroine, is a captivating girl, whose lover begins his acquaintance with her as her father's bond servant, having sold himself to Mr. Meredith under a colonial law governing the importation of a certain class of laborers. Janice falls in love with him and he with her; but Mr. Meredith, when the war for independence breaks out, is a royalist, while the lover becomes a staunch rebel. There is mystery in the plot, and Janice is led a trying chase in dodging one lover and another in the course of her entangling experiences. Her agility, bravery, cleverness and versatility lend a breezy charm to the heavier current of life with which she is sur-

* JANICE MEREDITH. A STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. By Paul Leicester Ford. New York. Dodd, Mead and Company. \$1.50